

## Bankruptcy Case Opening Procedure

This process shows the steps and screens required for the Attorney to open a bankruptcy case on CM/ECF. The case shown in this example is a Chapter 7, no asset, individual consumer.

- STEP 1** Click on the Bankruptcy hyperlink on the CM/ECF Main Menu Bar. (See Figure 1.)

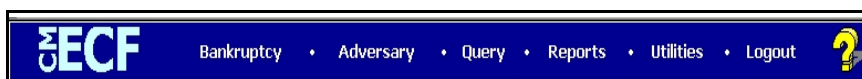


Figure 1

- STEP 2** The **Bankruptcy Events** screen displays. (See Figure 2)



Figure 2

- ◆ Click on the Open a BK Case hyperlink.
- ◆ Clicking on the (Help)  icon will display information about these categories. (See Figure 2a)

This feature is available throughout the CM/ECF application.

**Bankruptcy Events**

Select one of the menu options available and subsequent screens will prompt you for the information required to:

Answer/Response	File an answer, response, or reply to an existing motion/application in an existing bankruptcy case.
Appeal	File an appeal to an existing case.
Batch Filings	File different documents to different (unrelated) cases at the same time. (See also Multi-Case Docketing).
Claim Actions	File documents related to claims that have already been filed.
Court Events	File documents or docket events (e.g., utility events) to which only court users have access.
Creditor Maintenance	Enter the names and addresses of creditors to an existing bankruptcy case, either individually or by uploading a creditor matrix. Also edit existing creditors' names and addresses.
File Claims	File a claim to an existing bankruptcy case.
Motions/Applications	File a motion or application to an existing bankruptcy case.
Multi-Case Docketing	File the same document to many unrelated cases at the same time (the user must make sure that there is no case-specific information in this document). (See also Batch Filings.)
Notices	File a notice to an existing bankruptcy case.
Open a BK Case	Open/Reopen a Bankruptcy Case.
Orders/Opinions	File an order or an opinion to an existing bankruptcy case.
Other	File a miscellaneous document to an existing bankruptcy case.
Plan	File a plan (e.g., Chapter 11 Plan) to an existing bankruptcy case.
Trustee/US Trustee	File a document related to the chapter trustee or the U.S. Trustee.
Trustee's 341 Filings	Allows the chapter 7 trustee to manage his/her 341 meetings, by date.

**Figure 2a**

- ◆ To close the Help screen, click on the “X” control box in the upper right hand corner of the Help screen.

**STEP 3** The **CASE DATA** screen will display statistical fields.  
(See Figure 3.)

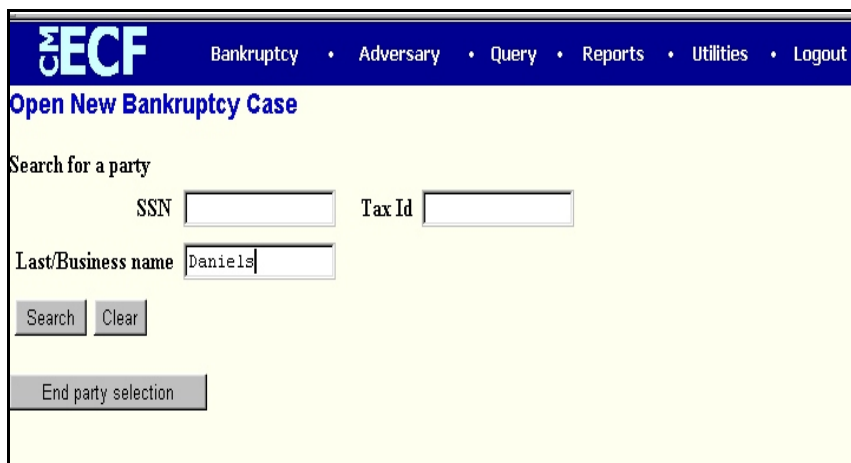
NOTE: In the Eastern/Western Districts of Arkansas the case number will not appear until the case has been submitted. The final confirmation will reflect the case number, debtors name, pleading number etc.. Upon viewing in queries it will show as: 1:01-bk-10048 (Division, Year, bk, case number assigned)



**Figure 3**

- ◆ The case number is generated automatically, skip this field.
- ◆ Select **Office** from the pick list or skip to accept the default.
- ◆ The current date is displayed in the **Date Filed** box.
  - To backdate this filing enter the correct date in the format mm/dd/yyyy or mm/dd/yy, including the forward slashes.
- ◆ Select the **Chapter** from the pick list box.
- ◆ The default value for **Joint** is **n** (no). For a Joint filing select **y** (yes).
- ◆ The **Case Type** always defaults to **bk**. There is no other option.
- ◆ The **Deficiency** box will always default to **n** (No). The deficiency will be docketed as a separate event after the case is open.
- ◆ When this screen is correct, click on the **[Next]** button to continue.

**STEP 4** The **SEARCH FOR A PARTY** screen displays. (See Figure 4.)



The screenshot shows the 'Open New Bankruptcy Case' interface. At the top is a navigation bar with links: Bankruptcy, Adversary, Query, Reports, Utilities, and Logout. Below this is the title 'Open New Bankruptcy Case'. The main section is titled 'Search for a party'. It contains three input fields: 'SSN', 'Tax Id', and 'Last/Business name'. The 'Last/Business name' field contains the text 'Daniels'. Below these fields are two buttons: 'Search' and 'Clear'. At the bottom of the search section is a button labeled 'End party selection'.

**Figure 4**

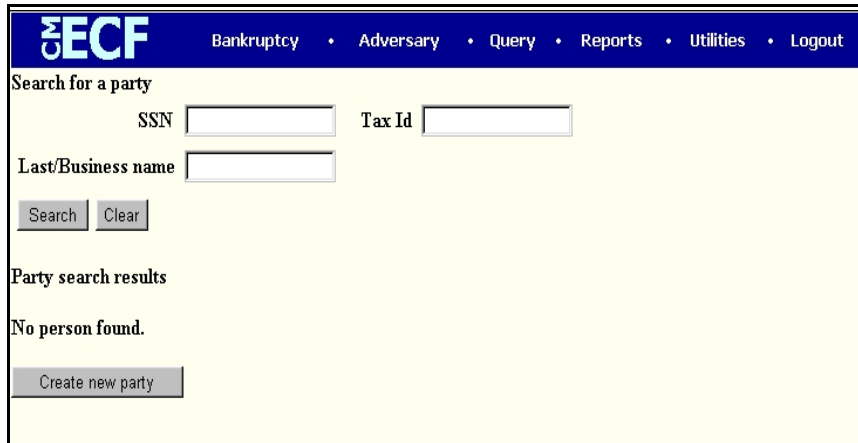
- ◆ To prevent duplicate person records, a search of the database for the filer is recommended. One can search by Social Security Number, Tax Identification Number, Last Name or Business Name. The system will respond faster if you use the SSN, TIN or Bar ID.
  - Enter the last name or the first few characters of the last name to search. The entire business name is stored in the **Last/Business name** field. The field size is 80 characters

**Search Hints:**

- Enter one field of data for each search.
- Format Social Security Number or Tax ID with hyphens.
- Searching is case sensitive. (Smith, not smith)
- Include punctuation. (O'Brien)
- Try alternate search clues if your first search is not successful.
- Partial names can be entered.
- Wild cards (\*) are not required at the end of search strings.
- Wild cards may be used before or within search strings. (\*son, Gr?y)
- A question mark (?) represents a wild card for one character only.
- An asterisk (\*) is a wild card for any number (or none) characters.
- The asterisk \* should not be used by itself. It will search ALL records in the database and use unnecessary system resources.

- ◆ Enter the debtor's last name in the **Last/Business name** field and click on the **[Search]** button to continue.
- ◆ REMEMBER: This field is case "sensitive"

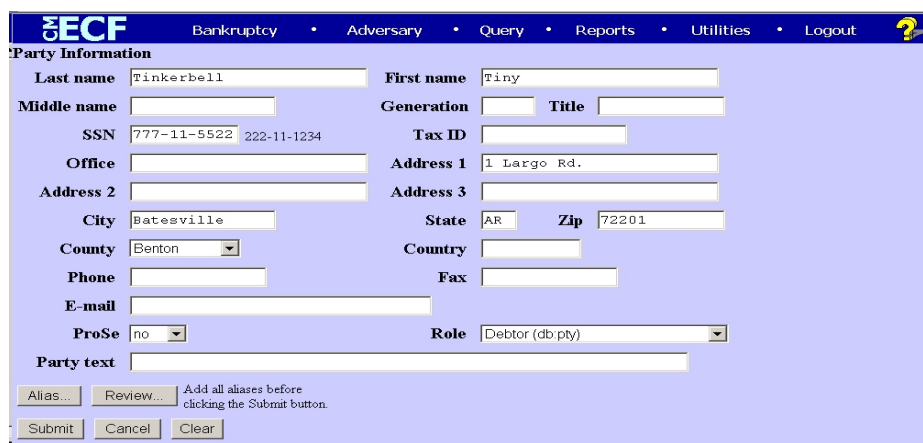
**STEP 5** If there are no matches, the system will return a **No Person Found** message. (See Figure 5.)

The screenshot shows the ECF (Electronic Case Filing) system interface. At the top is a blue header with the ECF logo and navigation links: Bankruptcy, Adversary, Query, Reports, Utilities, and Logout. Below the header is a yellow search area. It contains the text "Search for a party" followed by input fields for "SSN" and "Tax Id". Below these is a "Last/Business name" input field. There are "Search" and "Clear" buttons. Underneath, it says "Party search results" and "No person found." At the bottom of the search area is a "Create new party" button.

**Figure 5**

- ◆ If the party is already on the database, select it by clicking on it with your mouse.
- ◆ If the party is not already on the database for this exercise, proceed to add the debtor by clicking the **[Create New Party]** button.

**STEP 6** The **PARTY INFORMATION** screen displays. (See Figure 6.)



**Figure 6**

- ◆ Enter the debtors Name and **Address** information in the appropriate boxes.
  - ◆ Select the debtor's **County** of residence from the pick list.
- NOTE:** Type the first letter of the county name for a faster search.
- ◆ For this example, leave **pro se** as **no**.
- ◆ When adding a party, the **Role Type** always defaults to Debtor. To change the Role Type, expand the pick list by clicking on the down arrow and select the correct party role.
- ◆ Enter further descriptive text in the **Party Text** field, if appropriate. (A Connecticut Corporation, Guardian of the State, etc.)
- ◆ If the party has an alias, click on the **[ALIAS]** button. If **NOT** continue with selection of attorney.

**STEP 7** The **ALIAS** screen appears. (See Figure 7)

New Alias Information					
	Last/Business name	First name	Middle name	Generation	Role
1	Daniels	David			aka
2					aka
3					aka
4					aka
5					aka

Click the Add aliases button to return to the Party screen and add more aliases, add attorneys, and submit all information for this party.

Figure 7

- ◆ You can enter up to 5 alias records on this screen. Alias Role selections include aka, dba, fdba, fka.
- ◆ Click on the **[Add aliases]** button.

**NOTE:** If the party has more than 5 aliases, click on the **[Alias]** button again and repeat the process as many times as needed.

**STEP 8** The **PARTY INFORMATION** screen appears once more. (See Figure 8.)

**Party Information**

Last name: Tinkerbell      First name: Tiny  
 Middle name:      Generation:      Title:        
 SSN: 777-11-5522      Tax ID:      222-11-1234  
 Office:      Address 1: 1 Largo Rd.  
 Address 2:      Address 3:        
 City: Batesville      State: AR      Zip: 72201  
 County: Benton      Country:        
 Phone:      Fax:        
 E-mail:        
 ProSe: no      Role: Debtor (db.py)  
 Party text:        
 Alias...      Review...      Add all aliases before clicking the Submit button.  
 Submit      Cancel      Clear

Figure 8

- ◆ At any time, clicking on the **[Review]** button presents a screen summarizing the alias activity for this debtor. (See Figure 8b.)

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Attorney(s) added:

None added.

Alias(s) added:

☒ Tinkerbell, Tiny One (fka)

Return to Party screen Clear Uncheck to remove from list.

Figure 8b

- ◆ Verify the information.
- ◆ Click on the **[Return to Party Screen]** button to continue.

**STEP 9** The **PARTY INFORMATION** screen will return again. (See Figure 9)

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Party Information

Last name: Tinkerbell First name: Tiny

Middle name: Generation: Title:

SSN: 777-11-5522 222-11-1234 Tax ID:

Office: Address 1: 1 Largo Rd.

Address 2: Address 3:

City: Batesville State: AR Zip: 72201

Country: Benton Country:

Phone: Fax:

E-mail:

ProSe: no Role: Debtor (db:pty)

Party text:

Alias... Review... Add all aliases before clicking the Submit button.

Submit Cancel Clear

Figure 9

- ◆ If you are finished adding information for this new party, click on the **[Submit]** button to continue with Case Opening.



**NOTE:** If this were a joint filing, a **JOINT DEBTOR PARTY** screen would appear next. (See **Figure 5** and continue process as new party.) The screen for search party for **JOINT party** will appear, continue process.

**STEP 10** The **STATISTICAL DATA** screen appears next. (See **Figure 10**)

The screenshot shows the 'Open New Bankruptcy Case' screen. The 'STATISTICAL DATA' section contains the following fields:

- Type of debtor:** Checkboxes for Individual (checked), Corporation, Partnership, Other, Railroad, Stockbroker, and Commodity Broker.
- Fee status:** Dropdown menu set to 'Paid'.
- Nature of debt:** Dropdown menu set to 'consumer'.
- Voluntary:** Dropdown menu set to 'voluntary'.
- Origin:** Dropdown menu set to 'Original'.
- Asset notice:** Dropdown menu set to 'No'.
- Estimated number of creditors:** Dropdown menu set to '1-15'.
- Estimated assets:** Dropdown menu set to '\$0-\$50,000'.
- Estimated debts:** Dropdown menu set to '1 \$0-\$50,000'.
- Date split/transfer:** Empty text field.

At the bottom of the form are 'Next' and 'Clear' buttons.

**Figure 10**

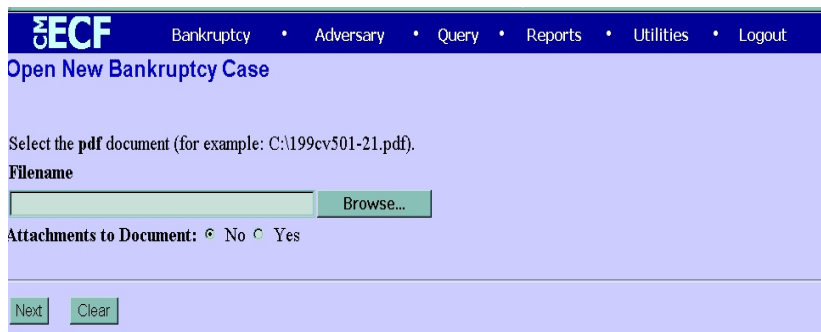
Select the **Type of Debtor** by clicking in the appropriate box(es).

- ◆ **Fee Status** values are Paid and Installment. If the petition is accompanied by an Application to Pay Filing Fees in Installments, choose **Installment** from the pick list. For this lesson, select **Installment**.
- ◆ Designate the **Type of Debtor** as Consumer or Business.
- ◆ The default value is for a **Voluntary** Petition. For Involuntary Petitions, select **Involuntary** from the pick list.
- ◆ Enter the correct **Origin** code from the values Original, First Reopen, Second Reopen, Third Reopen, Split or Inter-District Transfer. No action is necessary if this is the first filing; the default value of Original is correct.

If a value other than Original is selected, the user will be presented with another pick list on the following screen.

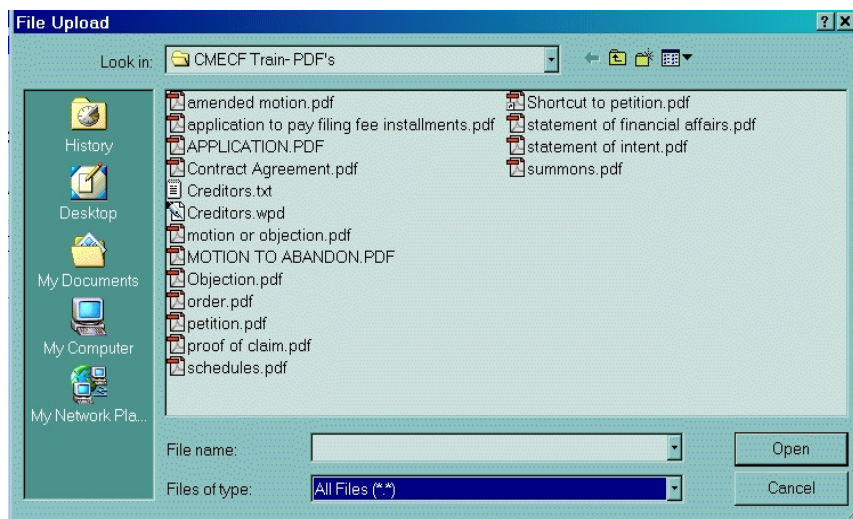
- ◆ **Date Split/Transfer** is only necessary when a joint debtor splits from the original case or if this case was transferred in from another district.
- ◆ Choose **Y** (yes) or **N** (no) for **Asset notice** designation.
- ◆ Select the range of **Estimated Creditors** from the pick list.
  - 1 - 15
  - 16 - 49
  - 50 - 99
  - 100 - 199
  - 200 - 999
  - 1,000 - over
- ◆ Select the correct dollar range for **Estimated Assets**.
  - Under \$50,000
  - \$50,001 - 100,000
  - \$100,001 - 500,000
  - \$500,001 - 1 million
  - \$1,000,001 - 10 million
  - \$10,000,001 - 50 million
  - \$50,000,001 - 100 million
  - More than \$100 million
- ◆ Select the correct dollar range for **Estimated Debts**.
  - Under \$50,000
  - \$50,001 - 100,000
  - \$100,001 - 500,000
  - \$500,001 - 1 million
  - \$1,000,001 - 10 million
  - \$10,000,001 - 50 million
  - \$50,000,001 - 100 million
  - More than \$100 million
- ◆ Click **[Next]** to continue.

**STEP 11** The **PDF DOCUMENT SELECTION** screen appears.  
(See Figure 11)



**Figure 11**

- ◆ To associate an imaged document to this entry follow these steps:
  - Click [**Browse**], then navigate to the directory where the appropriate PDF file is located and highlight it with your mouse. (See **Figure 11a**.)



**Figure 11a**

- To make certain you are about to associate the correct PDF file for this entry, right-click on the filename with your mouse and select **Open**. (See **Figure 11b**)

- This will launch the Adobe Acrobat Reader to display the contents of the imaged document. Verify that the document is correct.

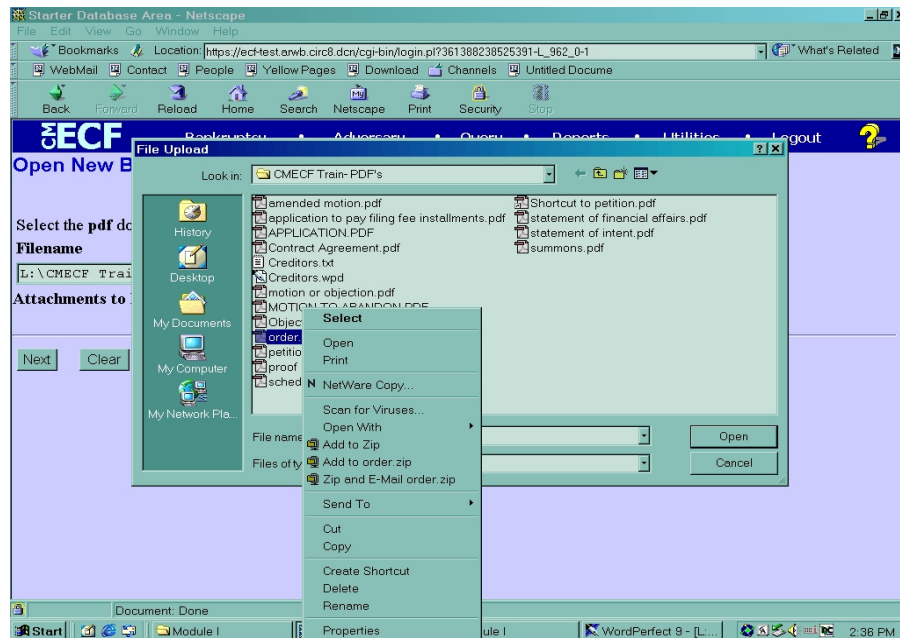


Figure 11b

- Close or minimize the Adobe application and if that is the correct file, click Open on the File dialogue box.
- ◆ There will be no attachments in this exercise. Attachments will be covered in another lesson. Therefore, leave the radio button indicating **No**.
- ◆ Click **[Next]** to continue.

#### STEP 12 The DOCKET TEXT screen displays. (See Figure 12)

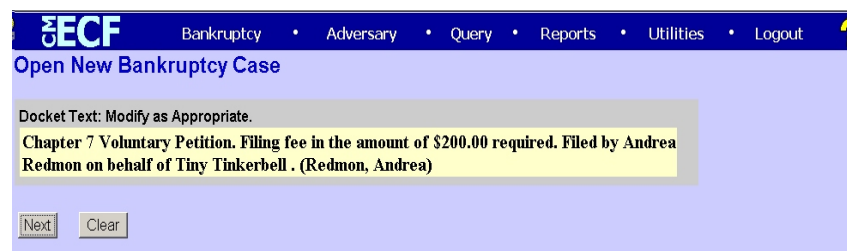
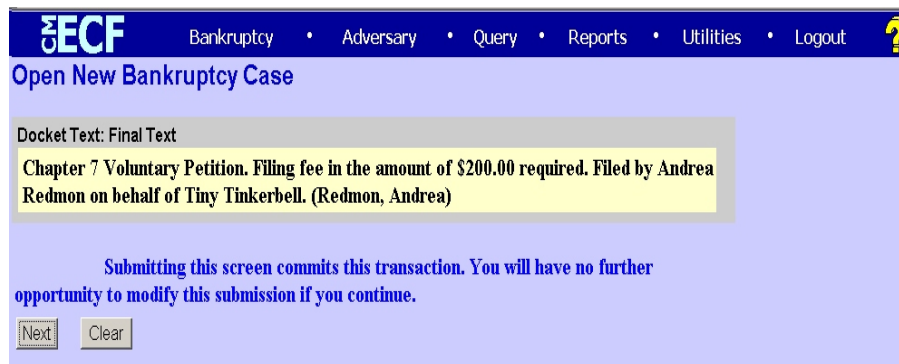


Figure 12

- ◆ Confirm that all is correct, click on **Next** to continue

**STEP 13** The **FINAL TEXT SCREEN** DISPLAYS, THIS IS YOUR LAST WARNING BEFORE SUBMITTING THIS TRANSACTION. (See Figure 13)



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Open New Bankruptcy Case

Docket Text: Final Text

Chapter 7 Voluntary Petition. Filing fee in the amount of \$200.00 required. Filed by Andrea Redmon on behalf of Tiny Tinkerbell. (Redmon, Andrea)

Submitting this screen commits this transaction. You will have no further opportunity to modify this submission if you continue.

Next Clear

**Figure 13**

- ◆ To abort or restart the transaction, click on the **Bankruptcy Events** hyperlink on the CM/ECF Main Menu Bar. Although this can be done at any time, this is your last opportunity to change the event.
- ◆ If the docket text is correct, click on the **[Next]** button to continue.

**STEP 14** The **NOTICE OF ELECTRONIC FILING** screen is then generated. (See Figure 14)



The screenshot displays the CM/ECF system interface. At the top, a blue navigation bar contains the CM/ECF logo and links for Bankruptcy, Adversary, Query, Reports, Utilities, and Logout, along with a help icon. Below the navigation bar, the page title is "Open New Bankruptcy Case". A link for "Notice of Bankruptcy Case Filing" is visible. The main content area shows a transaction received from Redmon, Andrea on 11/1/2001 at 3:21 PM CST. The case details are: Case Name: Tiny Tinkerbell, Case Number: 1:01-bk-10780, and Document Number: 1. The Docket Text states: "Chapter 7 Voluntary Petition. Filing fee in the amount of \$200.00 required. Filed by Andrea Redmon on behalf of Tiny Tinkerbell. (Redmon, Andrea)". Below this, it indicates that the following document(s) are associated with this transaction. The document description is "Main Document" with the original filename "L:/CMECF Train- PDF's/petition.pdf". The Electronic document Stamp is shown as: [STAMP bkecfStamp\_ID=990647545 [Date=11/1/2001] [FileNumber=12925-0] [1a6902086901978e34bc97effc3d6c312748a803e02edf62f395a8199279d4859fa38fe963546a14da2786cc092614762f3886a3d87c132c8f8fadc4b303aa57]]

**Figure 14**

- ◆ **The Notice of Electronic Filing is the verification that the filing has been sent electronically to the court's database. It certifies that the petition is now an official court document. Future access to this notice is available from a docket sheet, a query or the calendar, or the Events Calendar.**

This certification was created in addition to the standard electronic notice. It also displays the debtor(s), attorney, trustee, case number, file date of the case opening information. (See Figure 14a)

**NOTE:** It can be used as an official notice of stay to stop foreclosures and other creditor actions. It can be saved or printed at the time of filing.



**Figure 14a**

The [Notice of Bankruptcy Case Filing](#) hyperlink appears at the top of the Notice of Electronic Filing. Clicking on this hyperlink reveals a notice summarizing the pertinent details and participants of this case.

**NOTE:** The time of day, as well as filing, will print on the seal when an attorney files the petition.

- ◆ Clicking on the Case Number hyperlink ([01-10078](#)) of the Notice of Electronic Filing will allow you to generate a docket report for this case.
- ◆ To print a copy of this notice, click the browser [Print] icon.
- ◆ To save a copy of this receipt, click [File] on the browser menu bar and select Save Frame As.
- ◆ This certification is available for future viewing and printing from the Query module.
- ◆ To print a copy of this notice, click the browser [Print] icon.
- ◆ To save a copy of this receipt, click [File] and Save As on the browser menu.
- ◆ Trustee and Attorney users will have access to the Notice of Electronic Filing at the time of their filing. Subsequent access to any Query or Report programs, including the Notice of Electronic Filing, must go through the PACER system. (See Figure 16)
- ◆ When an attorney or other external filers selects a menu option from Reports, Query or the Claims Register, they will be presented with the Public Access to Electronic Records (PACER) screen. (See Figure 16)

**ECF** Bankruptcy • Adversary • Query • Reports • Utilities • Logout ?

### PACER Login

**Notice**  
This is a **Restricted Web Site** for Official Court Business only. Unauthorized entry is prohibited subject to prosecution under Title 18 of the U.S. Code. All activities and access attempts are logged.

**Instructions**  
Enter your ECF login and password for electronic filing capabilities. If you do not need filing capabilities, enter your PACER login and password. If you do not have a PACER login, contact the PACER Service Center to establish an account. You may register online at <http://pacer.psc.uscourts.gov> or call the PACER Service Center at (800) 676-6856 or (210) 301-6440.

An access fee of \$ .07 per page, as approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States at its September 1998 session, will be assessed for access to this service. All inquiries will be charged to your PACER login that is kept on file. If you do not need filing capabilities, enter your PACER login and password. The Client code is provided to the PACER user as a means of tracking transactions by client. This code can be up to thirty two alphanumeric characters long.

**Authentication**

Login:

Password:

Client code:

Figure 16



**Users must already be registered with the PACER system to have a login and password. Note the information on the screen below.**

**When a copy of the Notice of Electronic Filing is mailed to each subscriber on the case, the following message will display at the top of the notice:**

**\*\*\*NOTE TO PUBLIC ACCESS USERS\*\*\***

**You may view the filed documents once without charge. To avoid later charges, download a copy of each document during this first viewing.**